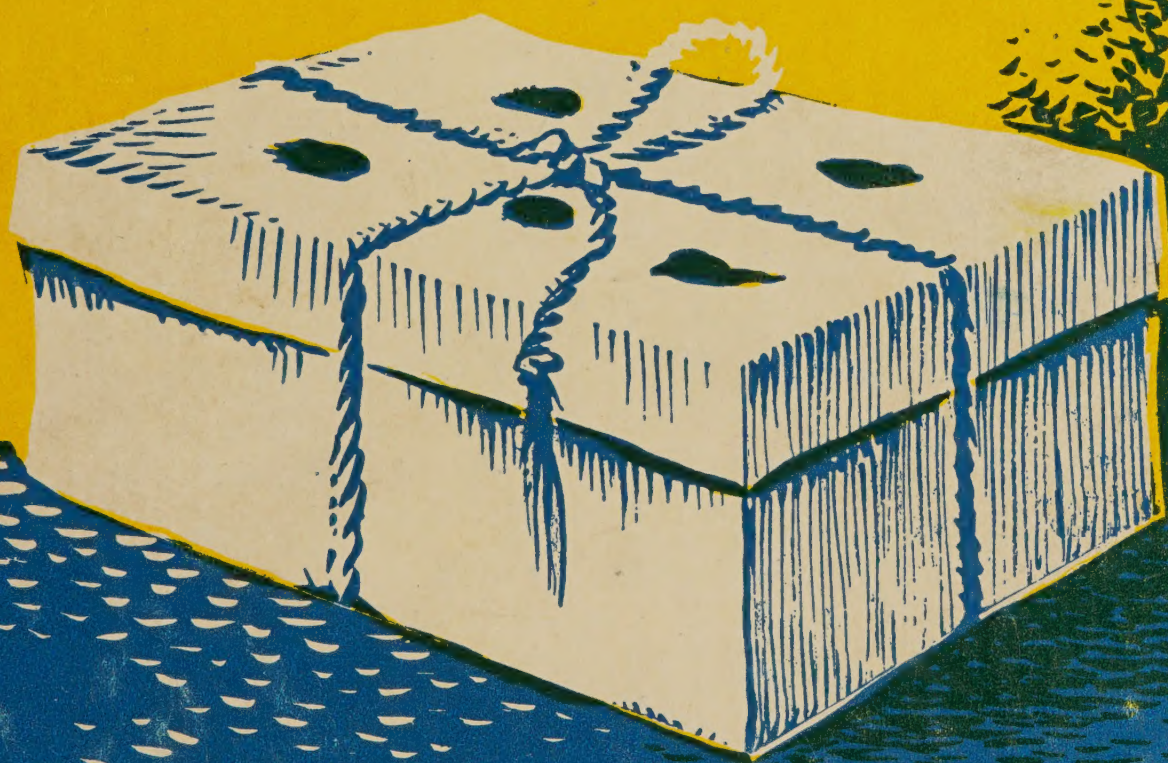


W.G. van de Hulst

THE SECRET IN THE BOX



FOR OUR YOUNGSTERS

Helen

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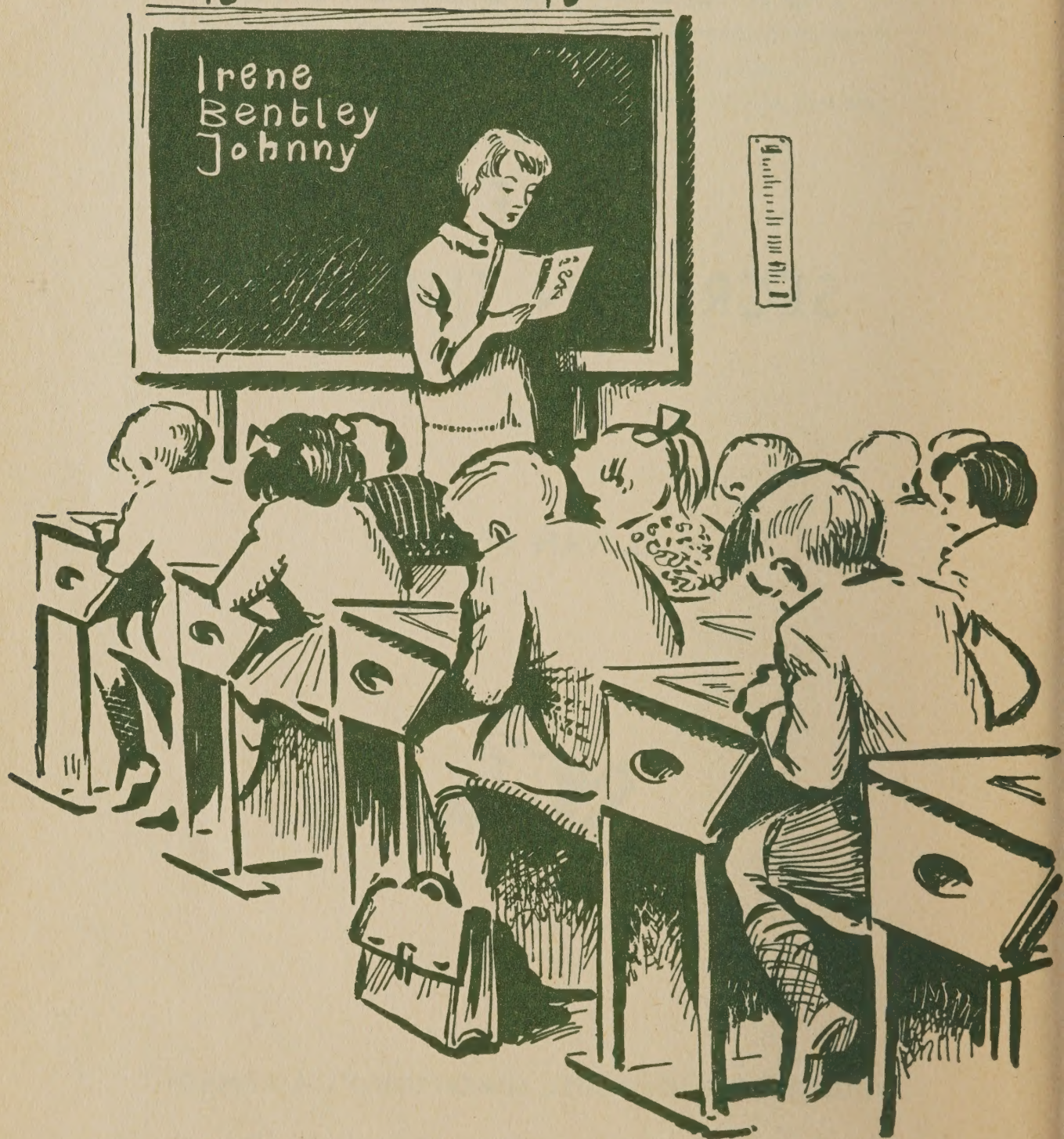
THE
SECRET IN THE BOX

BY

W. G. VAN DE HULST



WOUDSTRA'S BOOKHOUSE, EDMONTON-ALTA-CANADA



1. The Box

Two little boys are sitting at their desk; ... away at the back of the room. Two brothers.

Jack is the name of one.

Jimmy is the name of the other.

And they are twins.

Their hair is a bit curly. Jack has brown hair, but Jimmy's hair is blonde.

It is very quiet in the schoolroom. The children are reading. Very carefully they are looking in their books. And very carefully they are following the words with their fingers.

Yes, ... they know the teacher is very strict.



But Jack and Jimmy are not looking in their books,
and their fingers do not point to the right word at all.

Why not?

Oh, look! Do you see that box?

Jack sits on one side of the box. Jimmy sits on the
other side of it.

The box is much more interesting than the story in
their books.

Jack laughs a little; Jimmy does, too.

And they both say, very softly, "Isn't it great?"

The teacher does not hear them.

The teacher can not see the box.

And the children in the class can not see the box
either.

But Jack and Jimmy can!

They look at it again and again, very quietly.

They are having so much fun!

"Isn't it great? . . . He can't get out, can he?"

"Oh, no! . . . Isn't he chubby?"

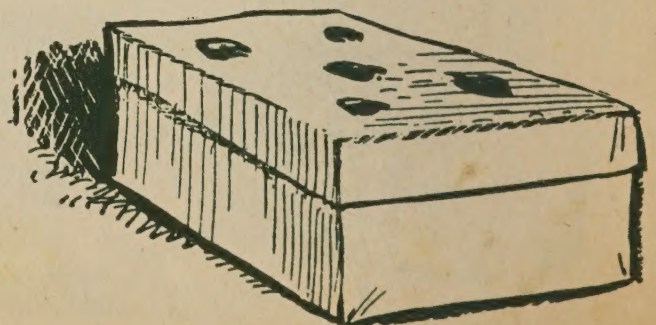
But what is in the box?

Yes, just what is in that box?

The teacher does not know. And the children in the
class don't know either.

Only Jack and Jimmy know.

It is a secret.



2. Just a Little Peek

"Shall I take a peek?" asks Jack very softly.

But Jimmy is frightened,... "Oh, no, don't! The teacher would see you."

"Just a little peek."

And Jack does it anyhow.

Oh,... he has already reached for the box,... he lifts the cover just a tiny bit.

"Watch out!" ... whispers Jimmy, "Watch out! The teacher is looking!"

And the cover falls shut.

Quickly they point to their books again; both of them.

But they do not point to the right word at all.

The teacher does not notice.

"Shall I take another peek?"

"Oh, no,... no, don't!"

"I'm not afraid. The teacher won't see it."

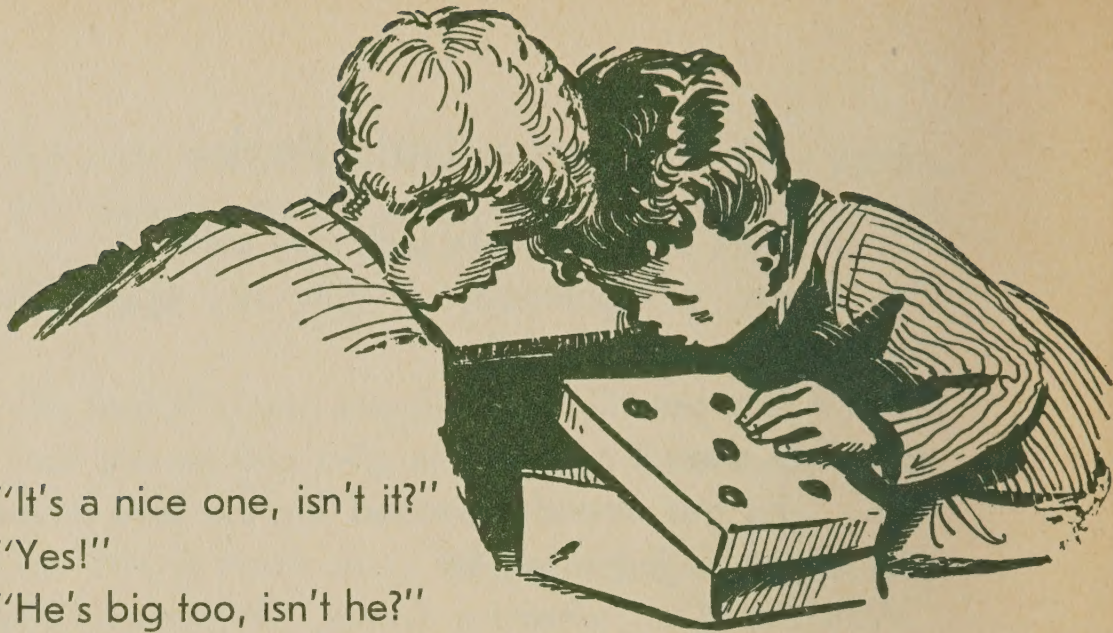
"Be careful, Jack! Be careful!"

But Jack doesn't listen.

His hand reaches for the box. Again the cover is lifted a little bit;... then a little bit more;... and still more.

Yes, there is something pretty in that box. It is green, it is shiny and it is smooth.

Now Jimmy peeks at the box, too,... with one eye.



"It's a nice one, isn't it?"

"Yes!"

"He's big too, isn't he?"

"Yes!"

Jack wants to take a closer look.

He bends his head down a bit, ... and down a bit further. Oh, his face is right over the box. Now he can have a good look.

"What a beauty!"

"Oh, oh! ... Watch out! Watch out! ... Jack! ... The teacher!"

Jack frightens. He sits up straight, very quickly.

But ...

Oh, poor Jack and Jimmy! ... Oh, poor, foolish boys! The box slips off the seat ... thump ... and onto the floor.

Yes, ... and the cover is ... off!

The teacher looks angry, very angry.

"Jack, will you read the next line!"

Oh, but Jack does not know which is the next line.
His face becomes red.

"Then you read the next line, Jimmy!"

Oh, but Jimmy does not know which line it is either . . .

The letters dance all over the page.

The teacher scolds, "Be sure to follow in your books, boys."

She looks angry, very angry; . . . but she does not notice the box.

That's good!

But there, under the desk . . . !

Hop! . . . Hop! . . . Very softly . . . Hop! . . . Hop!

The teacher does not hear it. And the children of the class do not hear it either.

But Jack and Jimmy do hear it.

Oh, how terrible!

They do not dare to look.

They do not dare to reach for it.

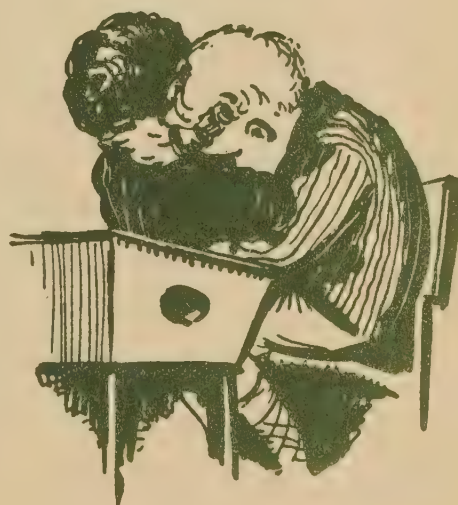
They do not dare to say anything either.

Their faces turn red. Their lips tremble.

Oh, poor, poor boys!

Hop! . . . They can hear it under the desk . . .

Hop!



3. Hop!... Here I Go Again!

Hop! The two boys can hear it, very softly and far away.

Hop! There it is again, still softer and farther away. And then, ... then Jack and Jimmy don't hear anything; not anything at all.

The other children in the class, all of them, are carefully reading in their books.

And the teacher is reading in her book, too.

But not Jack and Jimmy! Oh, no! They cannot look in their books.

They are so frightened!

And quietly, very quietly ... just for a moment, ... they peek under the desk.

Yes, the box is still there.

And there is the cover.

But, where ... oh, where is ...?

Oh, he is gone! He is gone!

They do not see him anymore. They do not hear him anymore. They do not know at all where he has gone.

They tremble with fear.

And they do not dare to say anything. They don't dare ask anything either.

Oh, those poor, poor boys!



But the other children, all of them, are carefully reading in their books.

The teacher is reading in her book, too.

It is very quiet in the schoolroom.

But suddenly . . . !

What is that?

What is the teacher doing?

Why is she acting so strangely?

Oh, look, look!

Something is on her shoe. She stares at it.

"Oh, no!" she screams, . . . "Oh, no! Go away! . . .

Go away!"

She throws her book down and climbs quickly, very quickly, on her chair. And she waves her arms and screams. The teacher is so frightened.

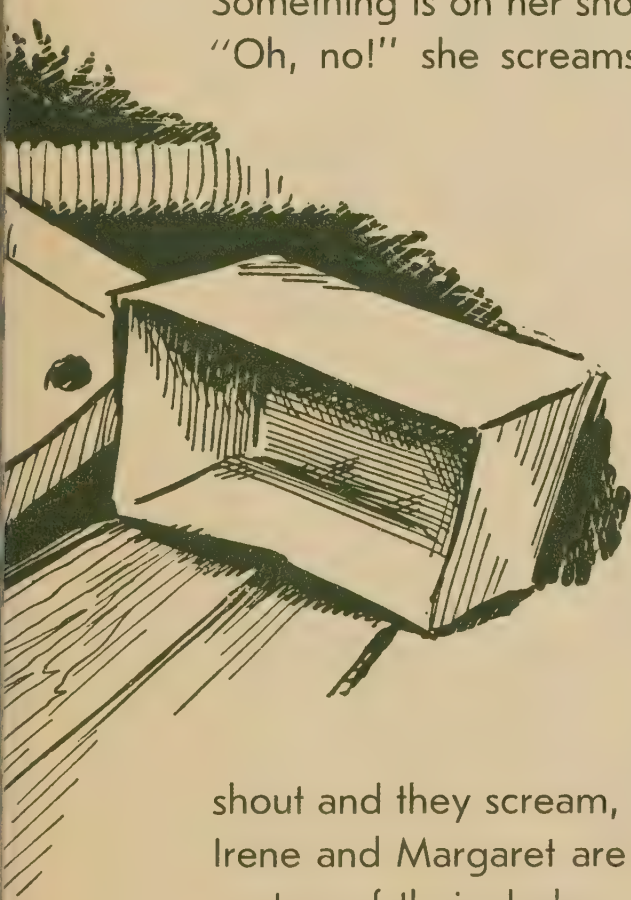
"Oh, no!" she screams, . . .

"Oh, no! Go away! . . . Go away!"

All the children are frightened, too.

They look, they point, they shout and they scream, "Oh, a frog! A frog!"

Irene and Margaret are frightened and climb quickly on top of their desks; . . . and Martin and Wilma do,



too; ... and Roxanne and Randall and Hether and Helen ... They all climb on top of their desks and shout, "Oh, Teacher, ... a frog! ... A great big frog!"

It becomes very noisy in the schoolroom.

Big Brian shakes his fists and shouts, "Teacher, Teacher, I'm not afraid! Shall I hit him on the head?"

And little Bentley jumps out of his seat and says, "Shoo! Shoo! Get out of here! Shoo!"

And Johnny, who sits in the front row, says, "Teacher I'll catch him for you.

I'll catch him with the dust cloth!"

Hop! Goes the frog.

Hop!

Hop! Here I go.

Hop! And now I stop.

Hop!

He jumps up to the blackboard. It looks as if he wants to be the teacher.

Johnny tries to catch him. He throws the dust cloth at the frog.

Oh, oh! He missed!

Hop! ... goes the frog.

Hop! Hop! Here I go.

10







Hop! And now I stop. Hop!
He hops right on top of Johnny's foot.
Johnny is so frightened.
He tumbles against the teacher's chair, but the teacher
quickly pulls him up on the chair.
Hop! . . . goes the frog . . . Hop!
Hop! Here I go.
Hop! And now I stop. Hop!
He jumps underneath the desks again, where it is
dark.
And the children laugh and shout, "Oh, Teacher!
Teacher!"
The teacher is so angry, so very, very angry about
the ugly, creepy animal! She shouts, "Who did
this? . . . Whose ugly, creepy animal is that?"
Poor Jack and Jimmy!
They are crouched down in their seats, their noses

are almost touching the desk top. They don't dare look up. They tremble with fear. And they are still pointing at the words in their books.

But the teacher asks again, "Who brought this ugly, creepy animal to school?"

Jack raises one finger, . . . just a tiny bit.

Jimmy ducks down still more. His nose touches the desk top.

The children shout, "Oh, Teacher, Jack and Jimmy brought it! Jack and Jimmy, Teacher!"

"Oh, what naughty rascals you are!"

The teacher looks angry, very, very angry at the two boys. She shouts to the other children, "Out! All of you! Out into the hallway. Quickly! Yes, all of you except Jack and Jimmy. Those naughty boys will have to catch that animal by themselves. Out! Quickly! Out into the hallway, and shut the door!"

The children rush out of their seats, out of the door, and out into the hallway. They are laughing and shouting and pushing. The teacher jumps off of her chair and hurries out into the hallway, too. And so does Johnny.

. . . And the door is slammed shut.

Jack and Jimmy are all alone in the classroom.

Jack and Jimmy, . . . and . . . the frog.

5. The Secret

Oh, . . . the teacher!

She is at the door, and she is looking through the glass. Oh, she looks so angry! And the children are pushing and shoving. They want to look into the classroom, too.

The door opens.

"Well, little rascals, is that animal in the box again? Be sure that it doesn't get out again . . . Who let that animal out onto the floor?"

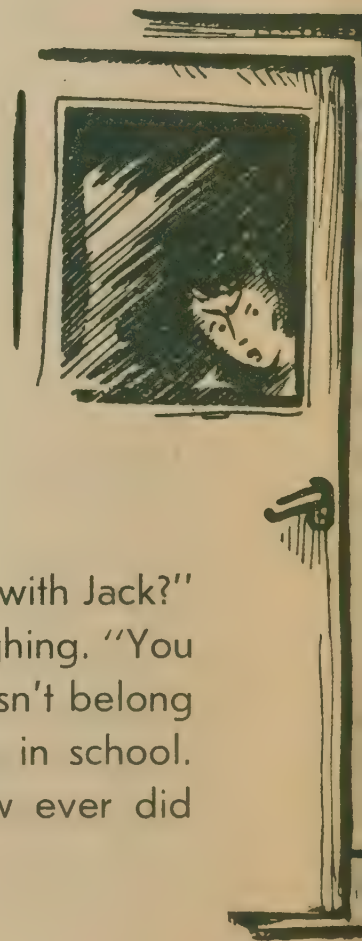
Jack says, "I did, Teacher . . . The box fell."

"Jimmy didn't do it?"

"No, Teacher."

"Then you will have to stay after school, Jack."

"Yes, Teacher."



But Jimmy raises his hand.

"What is it, Jimmy?"

"Teacher, may I stay after school, too, . . . with Jack?"

The teacher bites her lip to keep from laughing. "You are rascals, . . . both of you. That frog doesn't belong in a box, and it certainly doesn't belong in school. Frogs belong in brooks and ponds. How ever did you get hold of that animal?"

Jack says, "We got him from Tony, . . . Tony, the milkman's son."

"Did he put him in the box?"

"Yes, Teacher. He caught him for us."

"Why? Just what are you going to do with . . . that . . . thing?"

Jack's face turns red, . . . and Jimmy's does, too.

They don't dare look up and they don't dare to answer, either.

The teacher asks again, "Tell me, Jack, what are you going to do with that animal?"

But Jack does not answer. He doesn't dare look up, either.

"You tell me then, Jimmy."

But Jimmy's eyes fill with tears. He sobs, "No, Teacher, no one may know about it. It is a secret."

Once again the teacher has to bite her lip to keep from laughing.

She strokes Jack's brown curls with her one hand and Jimmy's blonde curls with her other hand . . . And she says, just as if she is still very angry, "Very well, little rascals, both of you stand in the corner. The one black-nosed rascal here; and the other black-nosed rascal over there!"

But the teacher isn't really angry anymore. Oh, no! She says, "Come, children, we are going to read



again, and we won't even look at those frog catchers anymore!"

Then it becomes very quiet in the classroom again.

There they stand now,... Jack and Jimmy.

Jack is standing by the window. Jimmy is standing by the door. And the box?... It is standing by the chalk-board. The teacher has put a heavy string around it.

Jack looks at Jimmy, just once. And Jimmy looks at Jack.

Jimmy has tears in his eyes, but he laughs just a little bit anyhow. It seems as if he wants to say,

"We've got him again... And no one knows what we are going to do with him. It is still a secret."



.
The other children have gone home now.

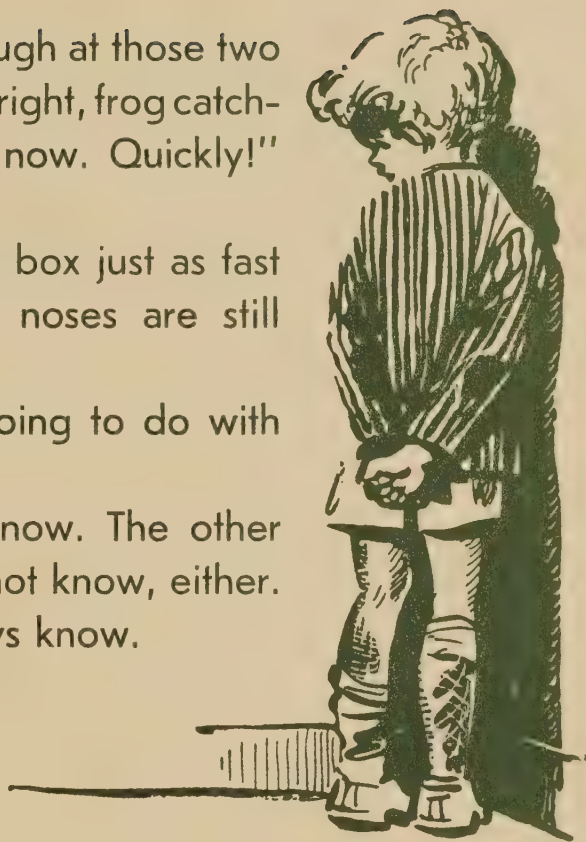
Jack and Jimmy must stay after school,... but only for a little while.

The teacher still has to laugh at those two silly boys. She says, "All right, frog catchers, you may go home now. Quickly!" And there they go.

They run away with their box just as fast as they can. And their noses are still black.

But, . . . what are they going to do with the frog?

The teacher does not know. The other children in the class do not know, either. Only those two little boys know. It is a secret.



6. At Home

It is very quiet at Jack and Jimmy's home.

So very quiet.

Yes, everyone must be quiet.

Mommy is sick. She has been sick for a long time now.

Mommy is always in bed.

Oh, that is too bad for Mommy, . . . and for Dad, . . . and for Jack and Jimmy, . . . and for little Rosemary, . . .

and for Aunt Katie, too, who must take care of them.
Yes, it is all very sad.

The doctor has told them, "When good weather comes, then Mommy will get better, too."

But it is still so cold, . . . and it is so windy. And sometimes it rains.

That is too bad.

Yes, it is quiet, . . . so very quiet at home.

But Jack and Jimmy have a secret.

No one may hear about it; no one may see it. Not Dad, . . . not Mommy, . . . and not Rosemary. And certainly not Aunt Katie! She grumbles and scolds so quickly.

Only Jack and Jimmy know.

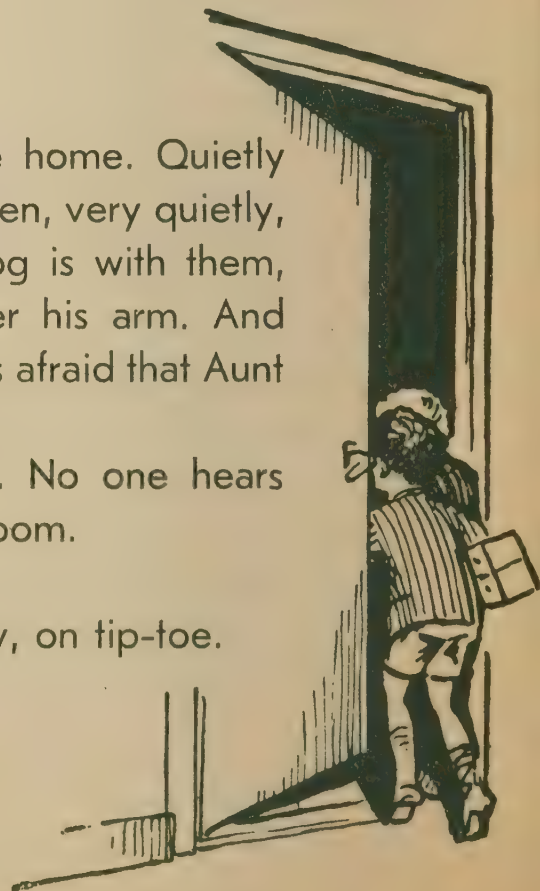
Yes, it is a secret.

See, now the boys have come home. Quietly they open the front door, and then, very quietly, they climb the stairs . . . The frog is with them, too. Jack carries the box under his arm. And Jimmy keeps looking back. He is afraid that Aunt Katie will see them.

But, no, . . . no one sees them. No one hears them. And upstairs is their bedroom.

The door is open.

They go into their room, quickly, on tip-toe.



Carefully they push the box under the bed. Teacher's heavy string is still around it.

And then, very quietly, they go out again, . . . out into the hallway.

It is very quiet in the hallway.

There is the other door.

But that door is closed. And behind that door is Mommy.

Mommy is very sick.

Jimmy whispers very softly, "Jack, what if the frog can't get enough air in the box?"

"Enough air? Oh, don't worry. There are five holes in the cover, you know."

And Jimmy whispers again, "But, Jack, what if the frog gets hungry? He has to eat."

"Eat? . . . What do frogs eat?"

"Little pieces of bread."

"Bread? . . . Frogs don't like bread."

"Then what? . . . A little dish of milk?"

"Milk? . . . No they don't like milk at all."

"Then what? . . . Little bits of bacon?"

"Bacon? . . . Of course not! But I do know what we can do."

"What is that?"

"Tony, the milkman's son, he would know. We'll ask him tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? . . . Poor frog! That's such a long time."

But Jack says, "Come on, now let's go to Mommy. But don't say anything!"

Very quietly Jack opens the door.

Mommy is having a nap, . . . but she wakes up right away. She smiles. She reaches out her hands to her boys. She loves them so much . . . Oh, but then . . . she takes a better look. She can hardly believe those are her boys!

She says, "What happened to you. Such black noses! And a bump on your head? And blood on your knee? And a tear in your pants? . . . Oh, won't your Aunt Katie be angry! What ever has happened to you?"

Their faces turn red. What can Jack and Jimmy say? How can they answer?

They think about their lovely secret. No, no, Mommy may not know about that! It is just for her that they have the lovely secret . . . What can they say?

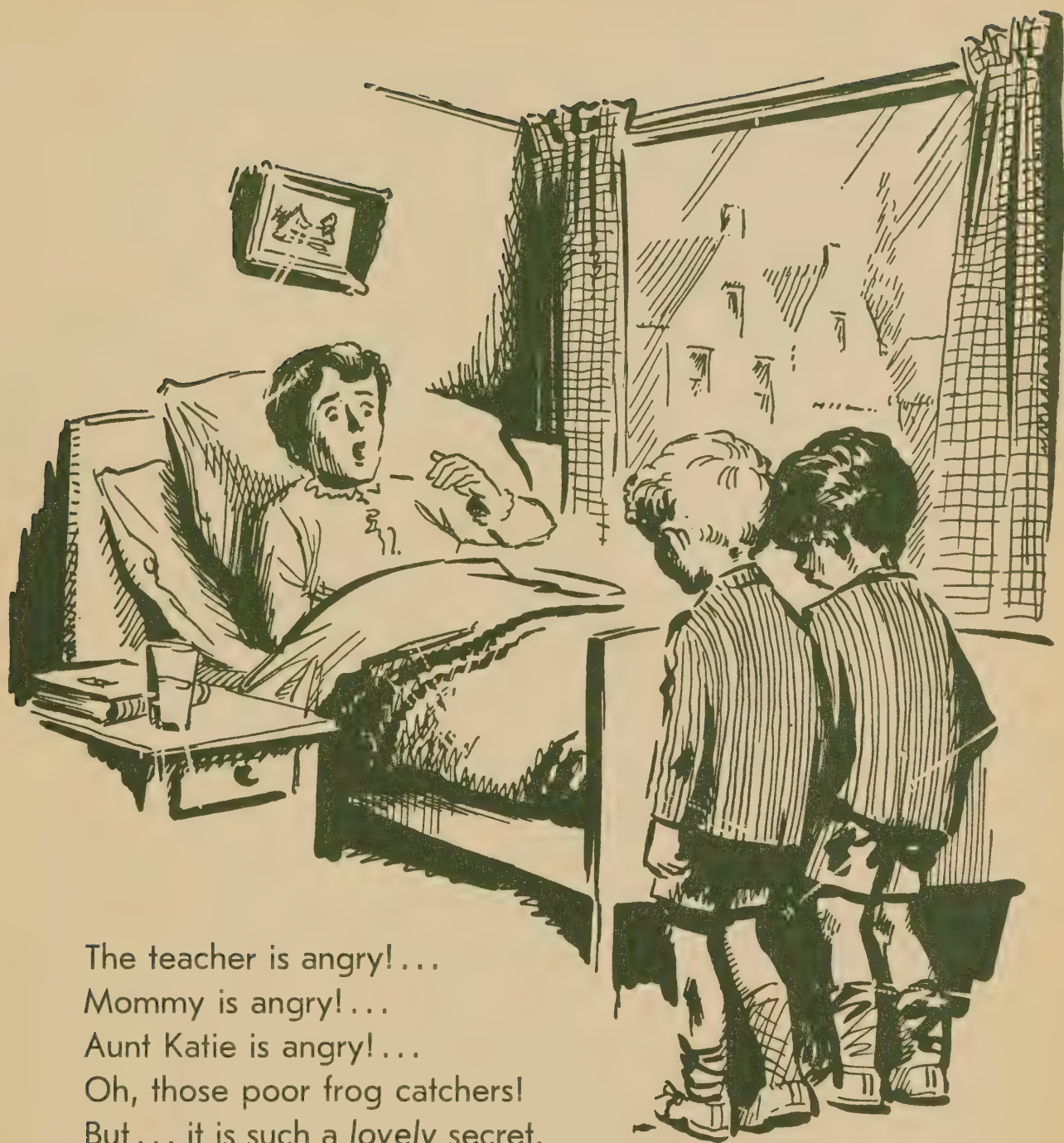
Jack stammers, "We, . . . we, . . . we crawled under the desks at school."

And Jimmy stammers, "We, . . . we, . . . we had to look for something."

Mommy scolds, "Oh, but you may not do that at school! . . . You are naughty boys! You will have no kiss from me now. Go quickly to your Aunt Katie . . . Oh, won't she be angry!"

Poor Jack! . . . Poor Jimmy! . . .

There they go.



The teacher is angry!...
Mommy is angry!...
Aunt Katie is angry!...
Oh, those poor frog catchers!
But... it is such a lovely secret.
And it is all for Mommy who is so sick.
But they won't tell anyone. Oh, no! Not anyone at
all!

7. In the Little Pail

Now it is evening.

Little Rosemary is fast asleep.

It is time for Jack and Jimmy to go to bed, too.

Aunt Katie has been quite angry, but she isn't angry anymore. Jimmy has a bandage on his knee, and Jack has a patch on his pants. Their black noses are clean again; their faces shine from being scrubbed.

And now Aunt Katie says, "Come boys, it's time to get ready for bed. I'll be up soon to tuck you in. It is still so cold. It isn't nice weather at all."

Not nice weather!

Jack looks at Jimmy, . . . and Jimmy looks at Jack. They *laugh* quietly, but Aunt Katie does not see it.

They think, "Not nice weather! Just wait Aunt Katie, just wait! It will be nice weather soon, perhaps tomorrow. We have a secret, but we won't tell anyone. Oh, yes, it is our own secret!"

They hurry up the stairs, . . . much too fast.

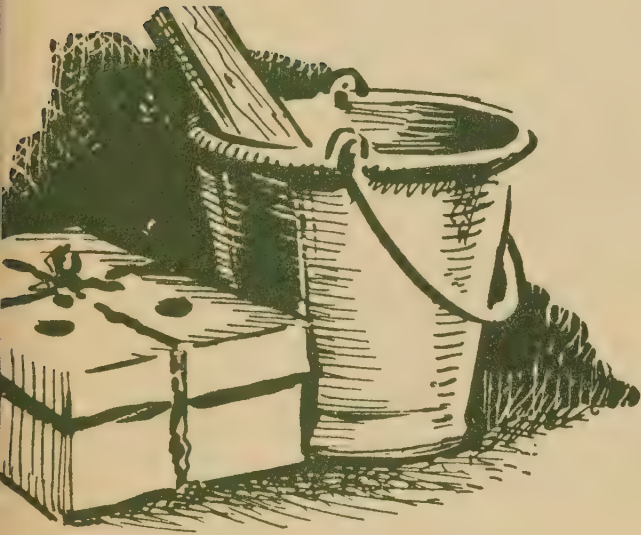
And they go to hug Mommy, . . . much too wild.

And then . . . then they rush into their room.

And then . . . ?

Then Jimmy looks under the bed. Yes, the box with

the frog is still there, but there is something else under the bed, too. It is something dark . . . It is a little pail and a little board. Aunt Katie always puts the peeled potatoes in that little pail.



Jack has quietly taken it out of the kitchen, and he has quietly brought it upstairs. Aunt Katie didn't see it at all.

Now it is under the bed. Jimmy whispers, "Shall I put the water in it now?" But Jack says, "No, not yet . . . Let's quickly crawl into bed. Then Aunt Katie will come to tuck us in.

And then, . . . after Aunt Katie has gone downstairs again, . . . then we'll put the water in the little pail."

They undress very quickly. One of Jack's socks lands on the bed; the other sock lands on the floor under the bed.

The boys jump wildly into bed and then they call, "Aunt Katie, can you come now?"

And Aunt Katie comes upstairs.

She scolds about the messy clothes.

She scolds about the messy blankets.

And then she asks, "Have you boys prayed already?"



Prayed?... Oh, no! They have forgotten that completely. But quickly they kneel by the bed and say their evening prayers,... much too fast.

They pray for Mommy, too.

They do that every evening, but now,... oh, now they are thinking much more about their lovely secret than about their prayers.

Aunt Katie tucks them in, under the blankets.

"Good night, boys. Sleep tight."

And then she goes away.
She turns the light off and closes the door.
It is very quiet in the little room.

But . . .
Jack whispers, "Come on, Jimmy. Are you coming with me? Be very quiet, though."
And Jimmy answers, "Yes I'm coming."
And then, very quietly, they crawled from under the blankets and reached under the bed. Jimmy got the little pail and Jack got the box.
Very carefully, Jimmy put some water into the pail.
And, very carefully, Jack untied the heavy string from the box.
And then . . . ?
Kerplunk! . . . Kerplunk!

The frog swam, . . . and splashed, . . . and dived.
Kerplunk! . . . I like this! . . . Kerplunk! . . . I like this much better . . . kerplunk . . . than in that dark box . . . kerplunk!
He swam against the little board . . . Kerplunk! What kind of thing is that? . . . Kerplunk!

Jack whispers, "I know a good place for him! We'll put him on the bed, right on the end, by our feet."
"Right on the bed? . . . But why?"

"Well, if we wake up during the night, we can take a look at him right away."

"But, Jack, what if he hops out of the pail?"

"Hops out...? Oh, I know. We'll just lay my pants over the top."

"Yes, I think that would be a good idea."

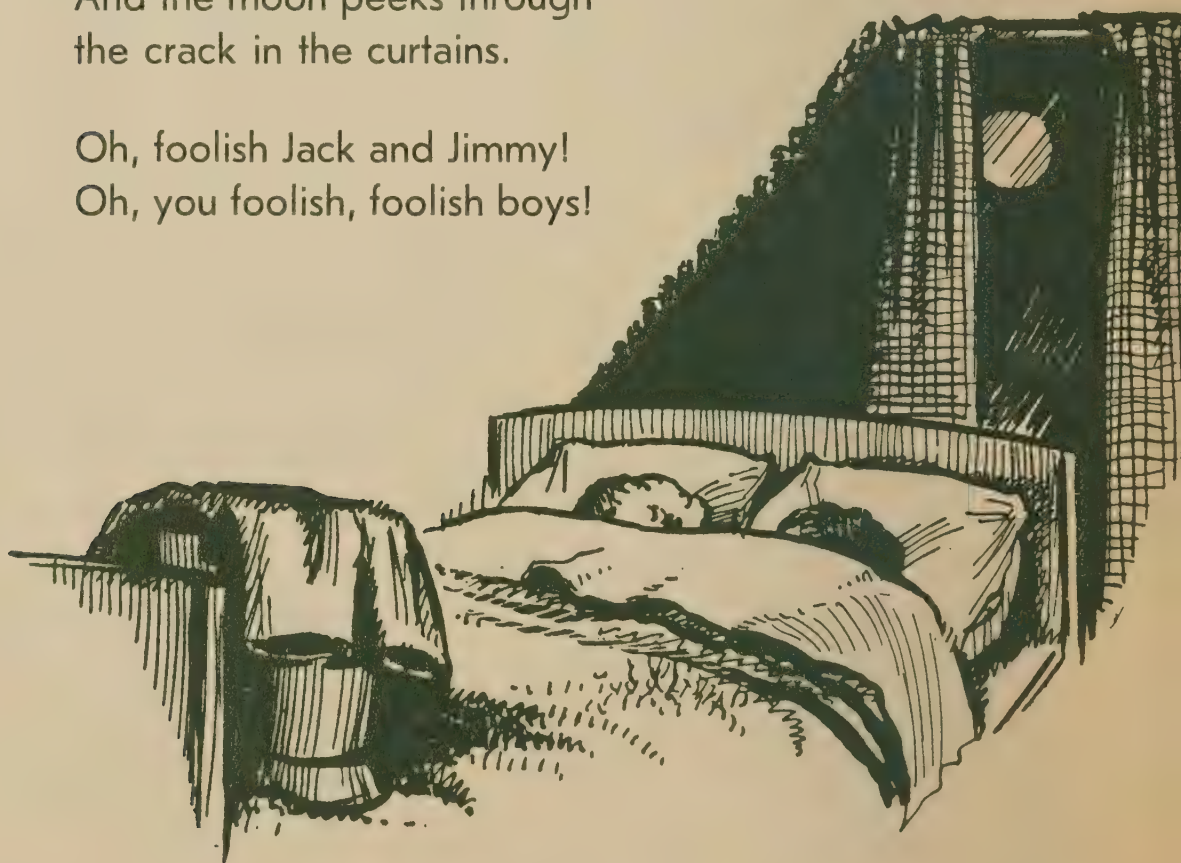
And there is the little pail, just like that, right on the bed. The frog is in the pail and Jack's pants are on top of the pail.

And Jack and Jimmy lie tucked under the blankets. They must lie very still, too, because the pail wobbles a bit.

And the moon peeks through the crack in the curtains.

Oh, foolish Jack and Jimmy!

Oh, you foolish, foolish boys!



8. If Only He Would

It was very quiet in the little room.

And it was very quiet in the little pail, too.

Then a head peeked from under the blankets, . . . and then another.

Jack whispered, "Shall I take a peek?"

Jimmy whispered, "Yes, do . . . perhaps he has climbed up on the board. Perhaps he is at the top already. Oh, if only he would be at the top!"

"Yes, then we will have good weather tomorrow, for sure!"

But Jimmy isn't so sure.

He said, "Tony, the milkman's son, wouldn't be fooling us, would he?"

"Fooling us? . . . Oh, no, he wouldn't! Remember what he told us? He said, 'If you put a frog in a big bottle or in a little pail with water in it . . . and if you put a little board in it . . . and then if the frog climbs up on the board, all the way out of the water . . . then we are going to have nice weather. Frogs always know ahead of time if we are going to have nice weather.' "

"Oh, I hope so! Let's take a look. Maybe he is at the top right now. If he is, then it will be nice weather tomorrow, and then *Mommy will get better again*. The doctor said so himself . . . And then no one will know that we are going to have nice weather. But

we'll know it, won't we? We'll know it first of all, and then we can run and tell the others."

They crawled on their knees to the little pail. They looked very carefully under the trousers, ... but, ... they couldn't see anything. It was much too dark.

Jack put his hand into the pail ... No, the frog had not climbed up on the board. The frog was not sitting at the top. Not yet!

Too bad! ...

Jack put his hand still farther into the pail. He felt the water.

And then he put his hand in still deeper.

Kerplunk! ... went the frog, ... kerplunk!!

It scared Jack so much that he fell over backwards.

Jimmy said, "Come on, Jack, we'd better go to sleep."

But Jack said, "Shall I try to make him go up on the board? Then it will be good weather tomorrow."

"No, don't! Don't do it!" said Jimmy. "Then he will get angry and he won't climb at all ..."

"I suppose so," sighed Jack. "I guess we'd better leave him alone; then he will climb up on the board for sure tonight. And then tomorrow we'll be the first to know about the nice weather."

And then the two little boys crawled under the blankets again.

They snuggled together away down under the blankets.

Outside the cold wind howled.

They did not hear it. They were much too happy.

Jack said, "Let's get up very early... and then we'll take a look at the frog,... and then we'll run to Mommy and say, "Mommy we have a secret! We have a secret! We know you're going to get well. We know it for sure!" "

Jimmy twisted and squirmed under the blankets. He was so happy. He said, "Won't that be wonderful! If only that frog climbs up to the top, then Mommy will get well again... Won't she? I love Mommy so very much."

"So do I."

"Be sure to wake me early."

"I will. Be sure to wake me early, too."

"Yes, I will."

"Oh, just think, we'll know it first,... and we'll be the only ones to know."

Then it became very quiet in the little room again.



9. Giant Frogs

And then, . . . everything became so strange, . . . everything seemed so very, very strange. Suddenly Jimmy seemed to be back in school again, . . . all alone.

And in the front of the classroom stood a pail. A great big pail. A giant pail.

Jimmy thought, "I'm going to see what is in that pail." But . . . the pail was much too big, much too high.



Jimmy climbed up on the teacher's chair, and he looked... he looked over the edge.

Oh, horror! There were frogs in that pail, giant frogs!... They glared angrily at Jimmy. And then they climbed up a board, up to the top, towards Jimmy... All of them climbed up the board towards Jimmy, one right after the other. They wanted to catch him. They snapped at him. And then they shouted, "Croak-croak! Catch him! Croak-croak! Put that boy in the pail! Croak-croak! Put that boy in the pail, too!"

Jimmy was terribly frightened.

Quickly he jumped off the chair; but... hop!... hop!... the giant frogs jumped, too. They jumped right out of the pail... hop!

Jimmy rushed quickly out into the hallway; but... hop!... hop!... the giant frogs jumped quickly into the hallway, too. Hop!... hop!... hop!

Oh, and there in the hallway stood the teacher!

She looked terribly frightened, and she screamed, "Oh!... oh!... Giant frogs! You naughty boy, it's all your fault!"

She ran up the street... And Jimmy ran up the street, too. And all the giant frogs followed right after them... hop, hop, hop! A hundred frogs!... A thousand frogs!... Hop, hop, hop!

And Tony, the milkman's son, was laughing at them. He was doubled up with laughter.

But Jimmy ran right on past him. He was so afraid,
so very frightened!

And the frogs . . . the frogs became larger and larger
all the time!

Jimmy dashed up the stairs but the frogs followed
right after him. They were shouting, "Croak-croak!
Catch him! Put him in the pail! Put him head first into
the pail! Croak-croak!"

And at the top of the stairs stood Aunt Katie . . . Oh, . . .
if Aunt Katie would see all those frogs!

Jimmy whispered fearfully, "Go away, go away, you





awful frogs! Go away! Aunt Katie will see you!"
But one frog snapped at his sock. One snapped at his
pants. One snapped at his sleeve.

"Go away! Go away, you awful frogs! ... Go away!"
He pounded them with his fists. He kicked at them
with his feet.

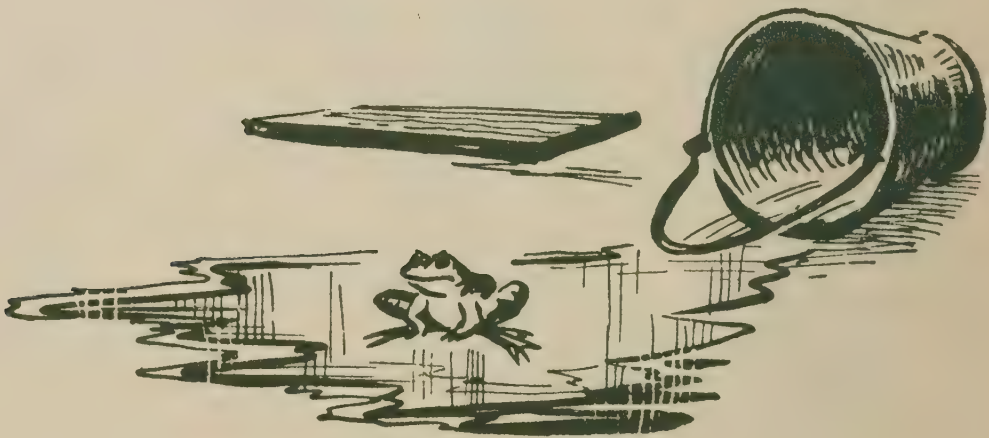
He kicked! ... and kicked! ... and kicked!!!

Oh, Jimmy, Jimmy! ... Watch out! You're dreaming!
You're hitting Jack's nose with your fist ... You're
kicking the little pail with your feet.

Watch out, Jack. The little pail is tipping! ... it's
falling!

Oh, you foolish, foolish boy! ... There it goes, right
off the bed! ...

Bump! ... Bump! ... Bang!



10. What Happened?

It was evening, but it was not yet night.

Daddy was quietly reading the paper.

Aunt Katie sat very quietly, too. She was darning socks.

Little Rosemary was fast asleep and Mommy was almost asleep.

Yes, it was quiet, very quiet, in the house.

Bump! . . . Bump! . . . Bang!

"Oh, how terrible!" shouted Aunt Katie.

"What was that?" asked Daddy.

"Mommy, Mommy!" cried little Rosemary.

"Ouch, ouch, my nose!" cried Jack.

And Jimmy? . . . Jimmy scared awake and sat up straight in bed. He looked, . . . and he looked . . . where had all those giant frogs gone so quickly?

And then . . .

Then the door opened suddenly . . . and the light was turned on.

There stood Daddy. He looked very worried. He asked, "What happened?"

Behind him stood Aunt Katie. She looked worried, too, as she peeked around the corner. She asked, "Yes, what did happen? Was it very bad?"

There was the box on the floor, and the heavy string,

and a puddle of water. There was something else there, too. Right there under the bed. What is that? . . .

"Oh, my pail! My little potato pail!" cried Aunt Katie.

"How did that get up here?" She stepped angrily into the room.

She did not see the puddle, . . . and she stepped right into the water.

"Ugh!" she cried, "What was that? . . . Oh, you naughty boys! What have you been doing?"

And Daddy scolded, "Come now, tell me! What was that noise? And what is that little pail doing up here? Tell me!"

Aunt Katie felt the blankets.

"Oh, you naughty boys, the bed is wet, too!"

Oh, those poor, poor boys! There they sit beside each other on the bed. They are so frightened. And they hardly know themselves what has happened.

Jack stammers, "Well, Daddy, . . . we . . . we . . .!"

And Jimmy stammers, "Well, Aunty, . . . we . . . we . . .!"

But just then little Rosemary began to cry, . . . and yell, . . . and scream . . . !

Rosemary's crib was in the other room, right near Mommy's bed.

Mother had told her, "Rosemary, dear, just climb out of your crib and come in bed with me for a little while. Did all that noise frighten you so? Come, dear, come in bed with me."

And so little Rosemary climbed out of her crib.

She pattered over the linoleum on her bare feet.

But just then she saw something right by her feet, right next to her little bare feet.

Oh, it was something horrible!



11. Such Naughty Boys!

The frog had decided to go on a trip.

Hop! . . . and another hop.

Hop! . . . and now I stop.

He thought, "This is strange country! I don't understand it at all. And I wonder where my pond is? I think I'll go and look for it."

Hop! . . . and another hop.

Hop! . . . and now I stop.

He hopped out into the hallway, . . . he hopped out into the other room. He saw the linoleum. It was bright and shiny. He thought that he had found his pond.

But then he heard a tap-tap-tap and he saw Rosemary's little bare feet. He thought, "Those are strange looking *animals*. I must have a closer look."

Hop! . . . and another hop.

Hop! . . . and now I stop.

And there he sat right by her little bare feet.

But the little bare feet stopped, too.

And little Rosemary began to cry, . . . and to yell, . . . and to scream . . . !

The frog couldn't understand what it was all about, . . . he didn't understand it at all!

But Daddy came running; Mommy got out of her bed; and Aunt Katie hurried to see. Aunt Katie was still

carrying the little potato pail.

"Oh, my dear, . . . my dear little girl, what's wrong?"

"An animal! An animal!" screamed little Rosemary,

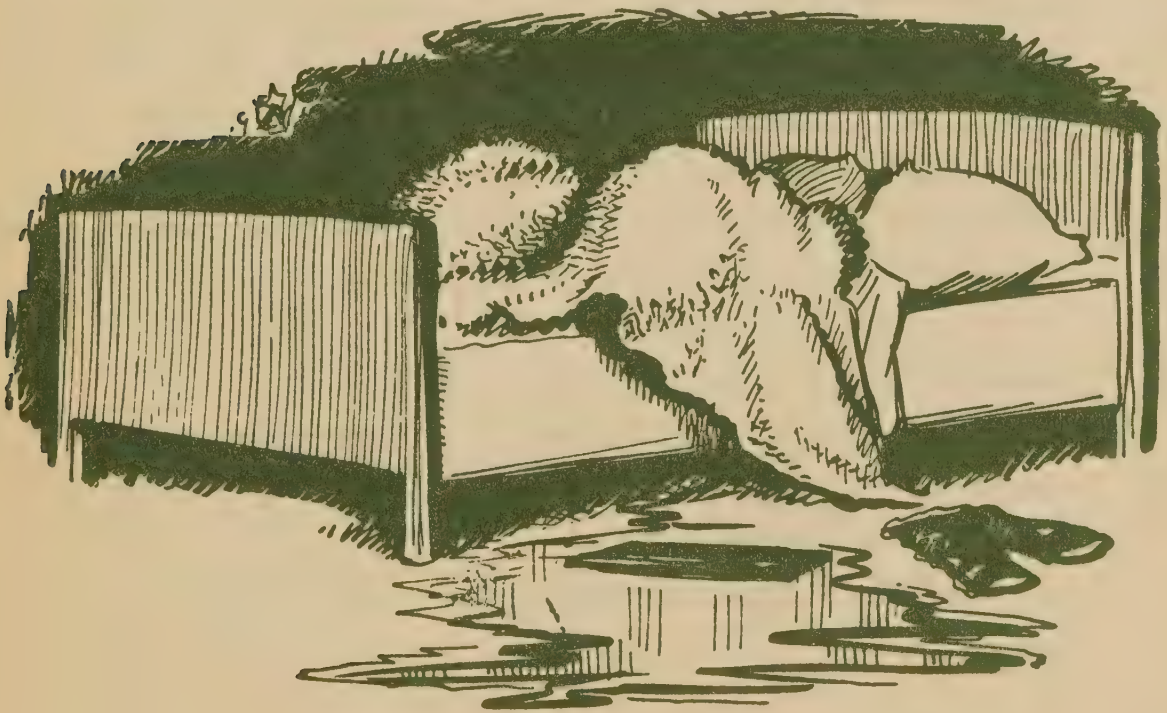
"An animal!"

The frog became frightened. He jumped this way and he jumped that way. He jumped on Mommy's bare foot. He jumped on Aunt Katie's wet slipper.

But Daddy said, "Come here, you awful beast!" And he caught him with his two big hands.

Poor frog! Now he was captured again.

And Jack and Jimmy . . . ? Oh they didn't dare look anymore. They didn't dare to listen anymore. They are shivering away down under the blankets . . . just like two little mounds of fear!



And then Daddy came back into the room. He pulled away the blankets and spanked both of them. He scolded, "You are naughty! You make so much noise when your poor Mommy has such a bad headache. You bring an ugly animal up here . . . You are naughty, naughty boys. You think only about having fun. You don't even care about your poor, sick Mommy at all. Aren't you ashamed of yourselves?"

Jack stammered, "But, . . . but, . . . Daddy, . . . we wanted . . ."

And Jimmy stammered, "No, . . . no, . . . Daddy, . . . we wanted . . ."

But Daddy was much too angry to listen. He scolded, "No, no, not another word! Go right to sleep . . . And don't let me hear another sound!"

Daddy put the frog in the box and took it along with him.

Aunt Katie wiped up the puddle and put another blanket on the bed.

And she grumbled, "Such naughty boys! Such naughty, naughty boys!"

Now it is night. Everything is quiet.

Jack and Jimmy are huddled close together, their arms are around each other's neck. There are big tears on their cheeks.

Poor boys! They have cried themselves to sleep.

12. With Mommy

It is early in the morning.

Mommy called, very softly, "Jack! . . . Jimmy! . . ."

The doors of the rooms were open just a little bit.

Aunt Katie had gone downstairs.

Daddy had gone away. He had to go away on a trip, very early.

Little Rosemary was still asleep.

Mommy called again, very softly, "Jack! . . . Jimmy! . . ."

She heard a noise in the little room . . .

Would the boys hear her?

She called again, " Jack! . . . Jimmy! . . . Come here to me".

"Yes, Mommy."

And here they come, very slowly, both of them. They hardly dare look up.

But Mommy says, "Boys, tell me, what happened last night?"

Jack bit his lip . . . Jimmy started to cry.

"Come, come, boys, just tell me all about it . . . Don't you love me anymore?"

"Yes, . . . yes, we do, Mommy!" sobbed Jimmy.

"Yes, . . . yes, we do, Mommy, . . . so very, very much!" cried Jack.

Then they told her their lovely secret.

They told all about Tony, the milkman's son. They

told all about the teacher who had been so afraid. They told all about Jimmy's dream, and about the little pail that fell off the bed . . . They told her everything.

"Come, crawl in bed with me for a little while," said Mommy. "Jack on this side and you on that side." They snuggled close to Mommy in the warm bed. And Mommy hugged them close to herself, Jack in one arm and Jimmy in the other arm. And she kissed both of them. She said, "Oh, but you are still my good, . . . dear, . . . foolish boys!" There were tears in her eyes. That is how happy she was.

They lay quietly together, all three of them, . . . for quite a while.

Then Jack asked, "Mommy, where is the frog now?" Mommy answered, "Daddy took him along this morning. He will put the poor animal back in the water again. Frogs don't belong in a house. They belong in a pond."

Then Mommy added, "You are such foolish little boys. Don't you know that a frog could never make



Mommy well? Oh, no!... Mommy must be very patient. The Lord Jesus in Heaven knows that Mommy is sick. He knows everything. The Lord Jesus knows too, when Mommy will get better again. He will never forget Mommy."

"But you boys must be patient, too. Can you do that?"

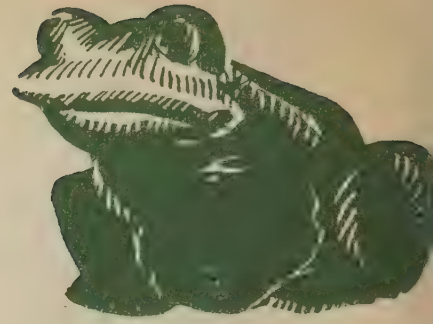
"Yes, Mommy."

"Will you pray for Mommy, too, every evening... really pray?"

"Yes, Mommy, we really will."

"Listen!... Here comes Aunt Katie. She is bringing me a cup of tea... Oh, won't Aunt Katie be surprised to see both of you in bed with me! I'll tell her the whole story,... I'll tell her everything."

13. Kerplunk!



And now it is evening again.
Jack and Jimmy have gone to bed.
They have kissed Mommy goodnight.
They also prayed for Mommy, really prayed, very
quietly, very reverently.
And then they crawled under the blankets.

But what was that?
There was a noise... over there... right behind the
pillows.

What could that be?
Jack got on his knees... He pulled the pillows aside.

Oh! Look at that! There is the little pail again, Aunt
Katie's little potato pail. This time it has a little cloth
over it.

How ever did that get here? It rattles.

Jimmy whispers, "Is there anything in it?"

Jack takes the cloth off, but he can't see anything in
the pail. It is too dark.

He feels with his hand... Would there be a frog in
it again?

No, that couldn't be... He feels again. He shivers as
he touches something.

Yes, there is something in the pail. It is cold. It is
smooth... And it has a head... and feet...
but it sits so very still...



Jimmy puts his hand in the pail, too. He whispers,
"Yes, I can feel a frog."

Jack says, "There are two of them. I feel a frog, too."
They pull the pail closer. They hold it in the light. Oh,
just look! There they are, as quiet as can be, two
frogs!

Two frogs... Two *chocolate* frogs!

Who did that?...

Mommy had planned it.

Daddy had bought the chocolate frogs.

Aunt Katie had put them in the little pail.

And now?...

Now Daddy and Aunt Katie are with Mommy.

All three of them are listening.

They can hear Jack and Jimmy as they scamper
around the room.

And together they are laughing about the little trick
they have played on those two frog hunters.

Jack and Jimmy run to Mommy as fast as they can.

"Oh, Daddy, Mommy, Aunty, ... who did it?"

But Daddy whispers, "Sh... Rosemary is sleeping."

And there... on Rosemary's bed sits another one of
those creepy animals. Another chocolate frog.

Oh, what a funny frog party
that will be!



Mommy whispers softly, "Boys, come here. The mosquitoes are dancing by the window. Do you see them? *That* is a sign that we will have nice weather tomorrow. Won't that be wonderful?"

.

And the frog? . . .

The real one? . . . He is sitting out by his pond. He looks this way, . . . and he looks that way. He sees something coming up the road. It is a horse and wagon. Tony, the milkman's son, is sitting on the seat. The frog shakes his wise head. Hop! . . . and now I hop. Hop! . . . and now I stop.



He was sitting at the edge of the pond. He looked around once more, . . . he thought, "Not me! . . . that's not for me! Never again will I go along, . . . never again will I go to that strange, strange people world! I'm going to my own frog world. That's the place for me!" He took another jump, . . . a great, big, giant jump and dived deep into the pond. Kerplunk!



Other available books by W. G. van de Hulst are:

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